

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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O 251527Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7074

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 AMMAN 1047

NODIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS,PFOR, JO, SA,US

SUBJECT: HAWK FINANCING -- TALK WITH KING HUSSEIN

REF: AMMAN 1034

1. AS INDICATED REFTEL KING ASKED TO SEE ME URGENTLY FEBRUARY 25. SHORTLY AFTER ARRIVING AT ROYAL DIWAN, HE SAW ME AND APOLOGIZED FOR HIS URGENT CALL. HE SAID HE HAD RECEIVED SOME INFORMATION ON THE HAWK FINANCING QUESTION AND HE WOULD LIKE TO GIVE IT TO ME RIGHT AWAY AS IT WAS OF SOME CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE.
2. HE TOLD ME THAT SAUDI ARABIA WOULD NOT PAY MORE THAN \$300 MILLION TOWARD THE JORDAN AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM AND THEREFORE HE HAD TO GO TO THE ONLY OTHER AVAILABLE (READ SOVIETS) SOURCE AND SEE WHAT KIND OF A DEAL COULD BE WORKED OUT.
3. HE THEN READ ME SECTIONS OF A LETTER FROM PRINCE FAHD TO HIM WHICH HE SAID HE RECEIVED ONLY AN HOUR OR SO BEFORE OUR MEETING.
4. FAHD'S LETTER BEGAN WITH USUAL GREETINGS AND THEN REFERRED TO THE LETTER WHICH KING HUSSEIN HAD SENT HIM ON FEBRUARY 18 ABOUT THE AIR DEFENSE PROBLEM AND A SUBSEQUENT NOTE IN WHICH THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FEBRUARY 29

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DATE WAS MENTIONED. THE LETTER THEN THANKS THE KING FOR

THE INFORMATION AND REASSURES HIM THAT SAUDI ARABIA SHARES HIS FEELINGS WITH SYMPATHETIC CONCERN. "JORDAN'S STRENGTH IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR THE ARAB NATION AND ITS STRENGTH, AND JORDAN'S MUST BE STRONG IN ORDER TO MEET ARAB OBJECTIVES." SAUDI ARABIA HAS NOT HESITATED IN THE PAST TO DO ALL IT COULD. SAUDI ARABIA WOULD DO HER DUTY IN THE FUTURE TO THE ARAB NATION IN THE EFFORT TO RECOVER THE OCCUPIED ARAB LAND."

5. THE LETTER THEN CONTINUED BY PRINCE FAHD WRITING THAT "HIS MAJESTY KING KHALID HAS ASKED ME TO PLACE AT YOUR MAJESTY'S DISPOSAL THE AGREED UPON SUM OF \$300 MILLION. SHOULD JORDAN FIND OBSTACLES IN ITS PATH IN IMPLEMENTING ITS AGREEMENT WITH THE US SIDE AND SHOULD HIS MAJESTY FIND IT ADVISABLE TO LOOK FOR ANOTHER SOURCE OF AIR DEFENSE EQUIPMENT, THIS IS YOUR RIGHT AND IS LEFT OPEN TO YOUR DISCRETION."

6. THE LETTER FINISHED WITH A DISCUSSION OF THE SAHARAN SITUATION SAYING THAT SAUDI ARABIA HAD TALKED WITH OTHERS (MOROCCO, MAURITANIA, ALGERIA) AND HOPED FOR THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOME. IT WAS A PATHETIC SET OF CIRCUMSTANCES AND SAUDI ARABIA PRAYED THAT THE THREE SIDES WOULD ACT WITH WISDOM TO END THEIR DIFFERENCES.

7. THE KING THEN TURNED TO ME AND SAID THAT HE CONSIDERED THIS THE FINAL WORD. HE WANTED ME TO CONVEY TO THE SECRETARY AND TO THE PRESIDENT HIS VERY DEEP PERSONAL APPRECIATION FOR ALL OF THEIR HELP ON THIS SUBJECT IN ALL OF THE DIFFICULT DAYS IN THE PAST. KING WAS OBVIOUSLY MOVED BY THIS DEVELOPMENT BUT WAS FIRM IN TELLING ME THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO DO AS THE SAUDIS HAD INDICATED HE MIGHT AND LOOK ELSEWHERE FOR THE EQUIPMENT. HE SAID HE WOULD WRITE TO THE SAUDIS AND THANK THEM FOR THEIR GENEROSITY AND INSURE THAT THE \$300 MILLION WOULD BE FORTHCOMING. JORDAN WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE AND WOULD PAY FOR THE \$12 MILLION TERMINATION CHARGES IN THE US CONTRACT TO COVER THE EQUIPMENT ALREADY ON ORDER USING THE SAUDI FUNDS.

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8. I ASKED THE KING IF HE WAS LEFT IN ANY DOUBT ABOUT THE SAUDI POSITION-- WHETHER THE SAUDIS WERE BARGAINING, WHETHER THIS APPEARED TO HIM TO BE FINAL. HE SAID THAT HE COULD ONLY BELIEVE WHAT THE LETTER SAID AND HE ASSUMED IT WAS FINAL. HE THOUGHT FOR A MOMENT AND SAID THAT WHEN THE HEAD OF HIS ROYAL COURT WAS IN SAUDI ARABIA LAST WEEK, FAHD HAD MADE VERY CLEAR ON TWO OCCASIONS HIS OWN BELIEF THAT KING HUSSEIN WOULD NEVER.

NEVER TO TO THE SOVIETS. THE KING SAID TO ME WITH
EQUAL DETERMINATION THAT HE COULD NOT PUT HIMSELF IN
A POSITION WITH HIS ARMY AND HIS PEOPLE OF NOT HAVING
AN AIR DEFENSE. WHEN THE JORDANIAN SOLDIERS IN THE
US STOPPED THEIR TRAINING PROGRAM, EVERYBODY WILL KNOW
ABOUT IT. "MY ARMED FORCES ARE COUNTING ON ME TO GET
THE AIR DEFENSE THAT THEY NEED. I CAN'T LET THEM DOWN.
YOU KNOW WHAT THAT WOULD PRODUCE HERE. WE WOULD BE
SUBJECT TO AN ENORMOUS WHIPLASH EFFECT."

9. HE CONTINUED BY TELLING ME HE DID NOT KNOW WHERE THE
\$300 MILLION FIGURE HAD COME FROM AND WAS NOT SURE HOW
THE SAUDIS HAD ARRIVED AT IT. I TOLD HIM THE ONLY
PREVIOUS FIGURE THAT I HAD BEEN AWARE OF WAS \$356 MILLION
WHICH HAD LEAKED INTO THE PRESS AT THE TIME OF CONGRESSIONAL

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7075

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 AMMAN 1047

NODIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

DISCUSSIONS LAST SUMMER AND AUTUMN. HE SAID THAT MIGHT
BE WHERE THE SAUDIS GOT THEIR FIGURE FROM. I REMINDED
HIM THAT WE HAD BEEN CAREFUL IN DEALING WITH HIM NOT
TO PROVIDE A PREMATURE FIGURE ON THE ROUGH ORDER OF
MAGNITUDE OF THE SALE. THE KING SAID THAT IT IS
IRONIC THAT THE SAUDIS WERE THE FIRST TO JUMP ON THE BAND
WAGON TO CRITICIZE THE US FOR NOT PROVIDING JORDAN WITH
THE MISSILES AND IN THOSE DAYS WERE CLEAR ABOUT THEIR
WILLINGNESS TO BE JORDAN'S FINANCIAL BACKER. "NOW
THE SAUDIS CAN'T EVEN GIVE US ENOUGH MONEY TO OBTAIN EVEN
THE NUMBER OF HAWKS THE ISRAELIS WERE PREPARED TO SETTLE FOR.

BUT THE SAUDIS HAVE BEEN GENEROUS TO US AND WE REALIZE
THERE IS NOTHING THAT I CAN DO NOW EXCEPT SEE ABOUT
USING THE \$300 MILLION TO OBTAIN THE EQUIPMENT ELSEWHERE."

10. I TOLD HIM THAT I DID NOT KNOW WHAT ELSE COULD BE
DONE OR WHETHER THE SAUDIS WERE MERELY BARGAINING OR
NOT. THEIR OWN FINANCIAL SITUATION DID NOT SEEM TO BE
PRECARIOUS. I SAID I WOULD RECOMMEND TO YOU THAT WE
LOOK INTO WHAT FURTHER WE COULD DO OR WHAT FURTHER MIGHT
BE DONE WITH THE SAUDIS IN THIS CONNECTION.

11. BEFORE I LEFT, THE KING TOLD ME HE WOULD BE GOING
TO DAMASCUS ON FRIDAY FOR LUNCH. WHEN I ASSUMED THAT
HE WAS GOING TO DISCUSS THE HAWK SITUATION WITH THE
SYRIANS, HE REPLIED WITH SOME DETERMINATION THAT
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"WE HAVE NOT DISCUSSED THIS QUESTION WITH THE
SYRIANS (SAUDI FUNDING) AND I DO NOT INTEND TO DO SO."
(SEPTEL PROVIDES FURTHER INFORMATION ON PURPOSE HIS
VISIT AND INTENDED DISCUSSION.)

12. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT IN THE LIGHT OF REACTIONS
FROM JIDDA TO PREVIOUS CABLES AND THIS ONE WE SEE IF
THERE IS ANYTHING WE CAN DO DIRECTLY WITH THE SAUDIS
(A) TO DETERMINE WHETHER THIS IS THEIR FINAL WORD AND
(B) TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO LOOK AT THE FUNDING OF THE
JORDANIAN SYSTEM WITH MORE SYMPATHY. COMMENT: IF KING HAS BEEN
BLUFFING ABOUT HIS INTENTION TO GO TO THE SOVIETS,
SAUDI RESPONSE IS SEEN FROM HERE AS BEST CALCULATED
STEP TO FORCE HIM TO TAKE THAT STEP. GIVEN HIS OWN STUBBORNNESS,
I WOULD BE MOST SURPRISED IF HE DID NOT APPROACH
SOVIETS SOON TO FOLLOW UP, POSSIBLY AFTER HIS TRAVELS
TO FAR EAST AND US NEXT MONTH, BUT POSSIBLY EVEN BEFORE
THAT. FACT THAT TRAINING WILL STOP FEBRUARY 29 AND HIS TROOPS
WILL BE COMING HOME FROM UNITED STATES IN EARLY MARCH WILL FORCE
HIS HAND WITH THE JORDANIAN MILITARY AND REQUIRE AT
LEAST THAT HE DECLARE HIS INTENTION SOON OF GOING TO
SOVIETS WHICH WILL MEAN THAT IT WILL BECOME PUBLIC
KNOWLEDGE RATHER QUICKLY. IN OUR TALK I REMINDED
KING AGAIN OF THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH I HAVE TOLD
HIM IN THE PAST I THOUGHT WOULD OCCUR IN THE US AND
ELSEWHERE, PARTICULARLY WITH THE CONGRESS, SHOULD HE
GO TO THE SOVIETS. HE SAID HE WAS FULLY AWARE OF THIS
AND REGRETTED HIS LACK OF OTHER OPTIONS. HE WOULD
HAVE TO TRY TO DO HIS BEST TO EXPLAIN THE SITUATION TO HIS FRIENDS
IN THE US DURING HIS COMING VISIT. END COMMENT

13. RECOMMEND DEPARTMENT PASS JIDDA.
PICKERING

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FINANCE, GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT, MILITARY AIRCRAFT, NEGOTIATIONS, MEETING REPORTS, CAT-C
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: vogelfj
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976AMMAN01047
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: P850107-2389
From: AMMAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760216/aaaaanrw.tel
Line Count: 223
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: 76 AMMAN 1034
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: vogelfj
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 OCT 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: WITHDRAWN <16 JUN 2004 by izenbei0, 3.4.X6>; RELEASED <07 OCT 2004 by KelleyW0>; APPROVED <19 OCT 2004 by vogelfj>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HAWK FINANCING--TALK WITH KING HUSSEIN
TAGS: PFOR, MASS, JO, US, SA, (HUSSEIN I)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006